punishment meted out to the Sky Marshals wherever misconduct has been established. NSG being an elite commando force of the country, created under the Ministry of Home Affairs, with its own in - built system of ensuring discipline and good conduct does not retain a commando on its strength when any complaint against him is received, if it is seen that there is even a shadow of doubt regarding his conduct.

Mutual consultations are held between Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS), NSG and the Airlines on an on-going basis and appropriate action is taken jointly to pre-empt such incidents.

Upkeep of old monuments in Pondicherry

*25. SHRI C.P. THIRUNAVUKKARASU : Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state :

(a) the number of proposals received from the Union Territory of Pondicherry for development of tourism during 2000-2001, 2001-2002;

(b) what are the details of proposals submitted by the Union Territory of Pondicherry and the amount allotted; and

(c) whether Government have any scheme to improve and upkeep the old monuments at 'Arikamedo' at Pondicherry?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM AND CULTURE (SHRI JAGMOHAN) : (a) and (b) Necessary information is given as under :

(Rs. in lakhs)

Year	Name of the project sanctioned	Amount sanctioned
1	2	3
2000-01	1. Refurbishment of heritage building— Pondicherry Museum	20.00
	2. Purchase of Touch Screen Kiosk	4.82
	3. Yoga Festival	2.00
2001-02	1. Tourist complex at Chunnambar	44.60
	2. Watersports equipment for Pondicherry, Karaikal, Mahe and Yanam	31.01

1	2	3
	3. Expansion of Jetty at Arasalar River, Karaikal	6.00
	4. Yoga Festival	1.47

(c) The Ministry of Tourism and Culture has decided to prepare a comprehensive Master Plan for the improvement and upkeep of the old monuments at Arikamedu at Pondicherry.

Interest rate on EPF

*26. SHRI JIBON ROY : Will the Minister of FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the Ministry of Finance is pressurising Ministry of Labour to cut down interest rate on EPF;

(b) whether Government are aware that EPF Board asserted that they are earning sufficiently to pay interests at prevailing rate; and

(c) if so, the reasons behind imposing cut in interest rates on EPF?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND COMPANY AFFAIRS (SHRI JASWANT SINGH) : (a) No, Sir. However, Ministry of Finance has advised the Ministry of Labour to fix interest rate on EPF accumulation for the year 2002-2003 at the rate of 9%.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The advice of the Ministry of Finance to fix interest rate on EPF accumulation for the year 2002-2003 at the rate of 9% is based on considerations of prudent asset-liability management, absence of risk capital reserve, anticipated decline in the income of Employees Provident Fund Organization in a soft interest rate regime and recommendation of an Expert Committee to benchmark the interest rate on EPF to average secondary maket yield on Government Securities.

Purchase of Turbo-prop Aircrafts by I.A.

*27. SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to purchase turbo-prop aircraft for the Indian Airlines for short haul routes on account of fuel economy and shorter runways in the North-East and North Indian Hilly regions; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?